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WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

City council rejects Rafah sister city, dialogue

by Phan Nguyen

On Tuesday, April 17, the Olympia City Council opened a public hearing on the proposal by the Olympia-Rafah Sister City Project (ORSCP) to formalize a sister city relationship with the Palestinian city of Rafah. The public communications period had begun with a racist diatribe against a supposed Asian threat, in reference to the recent Virginia Tech shootings. It followed with several racist diatribes against a supposed Palestinian/Arab/Muslim threat, and it ended with the City Council pandering to this supposed threat and denying formal sister city status with Rafah.

50 people spoke in favor of the sister city proposal, while 24 spoke against. The city council voted 4-2 against the proposal, with TJ Johnson and Laura Ware voting in favor. Joe Hyer was absent, and all others voted against.Thus it was ironic that those who spoke in support outnumbered the opposition 2 to 1, but that the proposal was shot down by the city council 2 to 1.

Racism at the City Council meeting

The first speaker during the public communications period was local resident Jim Reeve, better known in the downtown community as "Moses," whose diatribe warned of an "Oriental" threat coming from an Asian or Korean Communist invasion, referencing the ethnicity of the Virginia Tech gunman. Although the City Council allowed Moses to speak, Councilmember Laura Ware turned her back to him in protest, and Councilmember Doug Mah left the room, both of whom recognized that the racist content of Moses' rant was unacceptable.

Moses is a downtown staple and a regular speaker at the City Council meetings. His rants are seldom coherent and are easily dismissed. However, he was followed by several speakers who utilized the same fear tactics and racist rhetoric in order to delegitimize the Rafah sister city proposal.

The opponents of the proposal did not need to resort to the most explicit epithets, such as "raghead" or "sand nigger" to get their point across. It was enough to play on the same one-dimensional stereotypes that enabled the Bush administration to wage war on Iraq.

Several terms were repeated by the opponents throughout the meeting: terrorism, violence, Hamas. These terms were useful because they fit the common western racist stereotype of Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims, and could be used without qualification. Rather than provide specific objections to the sister city proposal, the issue could be clouded with imagery of post-9/11 and "War on Terror" era threats.

Thus speakers in opposition hoped to shoot down the proposal by making unqualified statements that referred to Palestinians as "bloodthirsty" and having "no shared values" with the people of Olympia. During the public hearing, the word "terrorism" and its variants were invoked with possibly more frequency than in a State of the Union speech.

> Opponents of the sister city had little to say about Rafah. Or else, everything they said sounded the same: Rafah, which has a population of 145,000, is a city "associated with terrorism," "full of terrorists," "a terrorist-dominated society..."

Consequently, opponents of the sister city had little to say about Rafah. Or else, everything they said sounded the same: Rafah, which has a population of 145,000, is a city "associated with terrorism," "full of terrorists," "a terrorist-dominated society," a "terrorist city" with "a terrorist government", a "gateway to terrorism," a "city ruled by the old guard terrorists PLO and the new guard Iranian sponsored terrorists Hamas" in a "country [sic] ...still overwhelmingly killing people in a democratic society", "a violent country, a violent city," a "city steeped in violent behavior."

Prior to the hearing, letters addressed to the City Council were just as replete with misinformation and evoked racist and xenophobic fears. There were claims that Rafah is "run by Hamas," which "sides openly with al Qaeda," that visitors from Rafah were potential terrorists and could "endanger the lives of our citizens and our soldiers stationed in Fort Lewis and McChord [Air Force Base]." Delegates from Rafah would come to Olympia to "spew...venomous hatred" and lend "encouragement to Neo-Nazis, skinheads and Klanners." Rafah was a "city filled w/ (and run by) radical Muslims, i.e. *terrorists* whose chief goal in life is to kill all the Jews and destroy Israel." "Rafah does not reflect Olympia's values." "Rafah does not reflect our views and is the home of Hamas." Palestinians are taught to hate "Jews and Christians, particularly those of Israel and the United States" They do not "want peace with Israel." The parents of Rachel Corrie had previously been "kidnapped and held for ransom." The sister city proposal was a "publicity stunt" by an organization that had already established a relationship between Rafah and "Madison, Alabama [*sic*]." These claims, in writing, came from the same people who spoke on April 17, and the claims were all false.

At the City Council meeting, two non-Jewish speakers uttered the phrase, "never again," thus comparing the prospect of a Palestinian sister city with the Jewish Holocaust, while one Jewish speaker likened Rafah to Nazi Germany. Two speakers claimed that Palestinians wanted to "drive the Jews into the sea," which is an old Israeli propaganda line, while another person absurdly accused Arabs of committing the Armenian genocide.

Some speakers sought to connect the violent stereotypes of Palestinians with ORSCP itself, and attempted to delegitimize ORSCP by portraying it as some sort of militant group. In the Olympian's online comments section, Matthew Litwin, a member of the Olympia Planning Commission, rhetorically compared ORSCP to the National Rifle Association. At the City Council meeting, Litwin attempted to shock the audience by revealing that the ORSCP website contained inflammatory blog entries "with titles such as 'Illustrating Occupation' and 'Israel's Increased Isolation.'" Litwin did not explain why he was offended by these titles. The entry entitled "Illustrating Occupation" was a series of pastel drawings created by Palestinians that *literally* illustrated life under what is internationally recognized as occupation. The artwork included images such as a peace dove breaking free from metal bars and barbed wire, and portraits of strong Palestinian women. Meanwhile, the article entitled "Israel's Increased Isolation" was written by a prominent Jewish commentator, M.J. Rosenberg of the Israel Policy Forum, who writes as a Zionist concerned with Israel's survival. Rosenberg's article was also printed in mainstream Israeli publications. These were the most extreme entries that Litwin was able to cite.

Litwin also attempted to discredit ORSCP through guilt by association, claiming that the "leadership of ORSCP overlaps closely with that of the International Solidarity Movement," which is patently false. In the *Olympian*'s comments section, Litwin elaborated. "Those who run and fund ORSCP are also those who run and fund ISM, which supports armed resistance against Israel, including its unarmed citizens." At the City Council hearing, Litwin claimed to be quoting from ISM's charter, which ISM does not have. More likely he was selectively quoting ISM's online FAQ. The FAQ clearly states that ISM, which operates under a policy of nonviolence, "does not support or condone any acts of terrorism," something that Litwin deliberately avoided mentioning. Regardless, ORSCP and ISM are separate entities that do not share leadership or funding.

▸ **Rafah** continued on page 6

City Hall was packed on April 17 during the public hearing on the Rafah sister city proposal. (photo by Muhammad Ayub)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

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Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress, *it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

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We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues
Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

ON THE COVER: A Palestinian girl decorates the memorial site where Rachel Corrie was killed in 2003. The area was later flattened by the Israeli military.

WIP Schedule

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Community Sustaining Fund grant cycle

The Community Sustaining Fund of Thurston County is pleased to announce our Spring 2007 grant cycle. Grant applications are now available to groups and individuals interested in progressive community oriented activities. The deadline for submitting grant applications is Friday, May 25, 2007. Grant criteria and application forms are available on request from Traditions Fair Trade (5th and Water Street, Olympia) or at **www.traditionsfairtrade.com**.

BRICK 4th Annual May Day Hoe-Down

Friday, May 4, 7–11 pm, at the South Puget Sound Community College Student Union Building

Yeehaw! It's time for BRICK's 4th annual May Day Hoe Down. Come celebrate International Worker's Day, springtime, and the 40 hour work week with good music, good food and good times. Featuring music by **The Tune Stranglers, Head For The Hills, The Grizzle Grazzle Trashcan Band, Square Dance caller Chris Dizmang, and DJ Okie**, plus games, squaredancing, a history of May Day, information from student clubs and community social justice organizations, free food and more!

BRICK is an activist student club at South Puget Sound Community College. BRICK is dedicated to social justice, world peace, and anti-imperialism. For more information, visit **www.spsccbrick.org**.

America in Solidarity May Day program

Tuesday, May 1, 6 pm
King's Books, 212 St. Helens Ave, Tacoma

America In Solidarity, the Tacoma-based grassroots working families' advocacy group, will present a special May Day program to honor the sacrifices of workers throughout American history. The show will feature **Frank Blair** and **Traci Kelly** of Tacoma's favorite progressive talk show, **Equal Time for the Progressive Side**. There will be labor songs, a few special guest appearances by local politicians, and an advance screening of a brand new film about a labor strike in West Virginia that paralyzed a town and galvanized a generation. **The Battle of Local 5668**, a new documentary by Shawn Bennett and Kevin Jones, tells the harrowing story of workers locked out of their jobs at the Ravenswood Aluminum Plant in Ravenswood, West Virginia.

For more information: **www.americasolidarity.org**, info@americasolidarity.org, or call 253-461-1123.

Voices of a People's History

Dramatic readings celebrating the enduring spirit of dissent
Saturday, May 5, 7:00 pm
(doors open at 6:15 pm, music begins at 6:40 pm)
The Washington Center for the Performing Arts
512 Washington St SE, Downtown Olympia

Voices of a People's History at the Washington Center for the Performing Arts is a presentation of readings from the book of the same name edited by **Anthony Arnove** and **Howard Zinn**. Other Voices performances have occurred in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Berkeley to great acclaim. The Olympia performance will be narrated by **Anthony Arnove** and will feature readers presenting true-life narratives from American history—from **Sojourner Truth**, **Tecumseh**, and **Eugene Debs**, to the present day—including an email from Gaza from **Rachel Corrie**.

Featuring **Anthony Arnove, Dennis Brutus, Nomy Lamm, Nina Laboy, Brian Jones, Cindy Corrie, Chanan Suarez-Diaz, Erica Lord, Holly Gwinn Graham, and special guests.** Plus music performed by **Hugo Flores, Miguel Perez-Gibson, and Daniel Perez Gibson**. The event will be wheelchair accessible and ASL interpreted.

$10 general admission. Tickets available through the Washington Center (360-753-8586), Rainy Day Records (360-357-4755), and Orca Books (360-352-0123).

Washington NOW 2007 conference

Sat. May 5 at TESC Long House, 9am–4:30pm

The National Organization for Women (NOW) will hold its annual state conference at the Longhouse at the Evergreen State College. This year's theme is **Building Bridges and Alliances**. The keynote speaker is **State Senator Rosa Franklin** from the 29th District in Tacoma.

The conference includes a series of workshops addressing challenges facing women today, family/community concerns, and social justice topics such as immigration reform and empowerment, reproductive respect, obstacles to multicultural education, trafficking of and violence against women, and more.

The NOW conference is open to the public and hosted by **Thurston County NOW**. The registration fee is $35 sliding scale. While this is payable at the door, pre-registration is advised to ensure lunch availability. No NOW member will be denied participation based on inability to pay registration fees.

Details, workshop schedule and directions are available at the WA State NOW website. Contact: Linda Malanchuk-Finnan, WA NOW Board & Conference Coordinator, www.wanow.org, lryh@hotmail.com, 360-357-7272

Drumbeat for Darfur

Sunday, May 6, 12:30 pm at Olympia Unitarian Universalist Church, 2200 East End St NW, off Division and Elliott

David Lynn, photojournalist par excellence, and humanitarian, brings us remarkable stories of tenacity and tenuous hope in the midst of pending starvation for Darfurians in refugee camps.

Come hear David talk about working with Mia Farrow, the amazing people he met, and 10 actions we can take to stop the genocide in Darfur–Chad, and where to send money for food supplies. Dave's presentation is in collaboration with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Drumbeat for Darfur campaign. UUSC's president, Charlie Clements, is an old friend and fellow humanitarian of David's.

Picket Ralph's Thriftway

Wed, May 9, 5–6:30 pm and Tues, May 22, 5–6:30 pm
Ralph's Thriftway, 4th Avenue between Fir and Wilson St.

Please join us in protesting Ralph's Thriftway Pharmacy's misogynistic policy of refusing to stock emergency contraception. Signs will be provided on site, but feel free to bring your own.

Utilizing the ballot to get what we want

Sat, May 12, 9am–5pm
The Evergreen State College, Lecture Hall 3

The Green Party of Washington State is holding its Spring Convention. Registration for the morning session is $5–$25, sliding scale, though no one will be turned away due to lack of funds.

Headlining the event will be **Elaine Brown**, a former national chair of the Black Panther Party and current candidate for the Green Party nomination for President. Other speakers joining Brown include: **Malik Rahim**, co-founder of the Common Ground Collective; **Aaron Dixon**; **TJ Johnson**; and **Dr. Muhammad Ayub**, an area physician and active member of the Green Party of South Puget Sound.

Dr. Ayub will start the festivities at 9:30 am with an opening address, "A Muslim Perspective of Green Party Organizing." The morning session will include work on party business.

Starting at 2 pm, the afternoon session—which is free and open to the public—will feature speeches and panel discussions with Ms. Brown providing the keynote address. **For more info:** www.wagreens.us, info@wagreens.us, (360) 532-0949

"Haiti: We Must Kill the Bandits"

A new film by **Kevin Pina**, Flashpoints correspondent for haiti. Sunday, May 20th, at 7:30 PM
The Capitol Theater, 206 E. 5th Ave, Olympia

Proceeds will benefit the **Haiti Information Project**. Spend the evening with filmmaker Kevin Pina as he presents his latest work chronicling the determined and inspiring struggle for democracy by Haiti's desperately poor masses. This provocative and lively film takes the viewer into parts of Haiti where few Western journalists dare to tread, and includes shocking footage of unreported human rights abuses, some which have been astonishingly conducted by UN forces. Pina's film stands out because it connects the tragic events in Haiti with what he assesses as foreign intervention designed to deter democracy. Learn the side of the Haiti story not seen in the corporate media.

Constitution in crisis: the case for impeachment

Olympia Public Library: Tue, May 29, 6:00–9:00 pm
Tumwater Public Library: Thurs, May 24, 6:30–8 pm and Tue, May 29, 6:30–8 pm
See the documentary of the February 20th Town Hall Meeting, featuring **David Lindorff, Ray McGovern, Elizabeth de al Vega**. Open discussion to follow.
impeachbush@riseup.net, www.citizensimpeach.org

Summer School for Union Women and Community Activists

June 27–July 1 at The Evergreen State College

The TESC Labor Center is hosting its 17th annual Summer School for Union Women and Community Activists. The Summer School is a unique leadership program that helps women find their passion and voice. Discussions/brainstorming sessions happen in small groups, enabling participants to share their knowledge and skills. The School provides a space for women to draw from their diverse viewpoints that they bring to the movement.

Come develop creative organizing and leadership skills! Learn how women can build a grassroots labor movement from the bottom up by discovering common ground, forging alliances, and sharing strategies. We are all the leaders we have been looking for!

Registration costs are $500, including meals and on-campus lodging; $425 if you need to pay for childcare while you are away at the school; and $400 for commuters (meals only). There are a limited number of scholarships available.

For further information or for help on obtaining scholarships, contact Nina Trifflеman, at (360) 867-6525; email, trifflen@evergreen.edu

MAY 2007

ETHANOL

GOING THE WRONG WAY

ETHANOL IS BEING PROMOTED AS A CLEAN AND RENEWABLE FUEL THAT WILL REDUCE GLOBAL WARMING AND AIR POLLUTION, BUT OUR RESULTS SHOW THAT A HIGH BLEND OF ETHANOL POSES AN EQUAL OR GREATER RISK TO PUBLIC HEALTH THAN GASOLINE, WHICH ALREADY CAUSES SIGNIFICANT HEALTH DAMAGE. MARK Z. JACOBSON, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

- IN COMPUTER SIMULATIONS, E85 (POPULAR BLEND OF 85% ETHANOL/15% GAS) "REDUCED LEVELS OF 2 CARCINOGENS, BENZENE, AND BUTADIENE, BUT INCREASED 2 OTHERS—FORMALDEHYDE AND ACETALDEHYDE. AS A RESULT, CANCER RATES FOR E85 ARE LIKELY TO BE SIMILAR TO GASOLINE."
- SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAD "SIGNIFICANTLY" INCREASED LEVELS OF OZONE, AND "INCREASED OZONE-RELATED MORTALITIES IN THE U.S. BY 200 DEATHS PER YEAR COMPARED TO GASOLINE, WITH 120 OF THOSE DEATHS OCCURRING IN L.A."
- NATIONWIDE, THE "ANNUAL NUMBER OF ASTHMA-RELATED EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS IS LIKELY TO INCREASE BY 770 AND THE NUMBER OF RESPIRATORY-RELATED HOSPITALIZATIONS BY 990."
- "THE DELETERIOUS HEALTH EFFECTS OF E85 WILL BE THE SAME, WHETHER THE ETHANOL IS MADE FROM CORN, SWITCHGRASS OR OTHER PLANT PRODUCTS... AND WILL CAUSE AT LEAST AS MUCH HEALTH DAMAGE AS GASOLINE, WHICH CAUSES ABOUT 10,000 U.S. PREMATURE DEATHS ANNUALLY FROM OZONE AND PARTICULATE MATTER."

SOURCE: NEWS RELEASE. STUDY FINDS ETHANOL VEHICLES POSE A SIGNIFICANT RISK TO HUMAN HEALTH. STANFORD UNIVERSITY, APRIL 18, 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
AMERICAN FARMERS INTEND TO PLANT 15% MORE ACRES OF CORN THIS YEAR — 90.5 MILLION IN ALL. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

THE GOOD NEWS IS...
[ACCORDING TO RESEARCHERS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY] THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT IN MARIJUANA CUTS TUMOR GROWTH IN COMMON LUNG CANCER IN HALF AND SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES THE ABILITY OF THE CANCER TO SPREAD. Science Daily 4.17.2007

IMPEACHMENT: A CONTINUING WILD RIDE

by Gail Johnson

When our group began meeting in July 2006, we had no idea we were embarking on Mr. Toad's wild ride. We began simply enough with a strategy to inform others about impeachment. We began by showing the Center for Constitutional Rights' documentary, *How to Impeach a President*, at the local libraries and at Traditions Fair Trade.

Over 800 people came to our February 20 town hall meeting, "Constitution in Crisis: The Case for Impeachment," to hear Elizabeth de la Vega, David Lindorff and Ray McGovern. None of the Congressional delegation attended, and only Representatives Brian Baird and Adam Smith sent staff to attend. (The edited version is supposed to be shown on TCTV in May).

Impeachment efforts in the Legislature took off on Valentine's Day this year. Freshman Senator Eric Oemig (D–Kirkland), along with eight cosponsors (including Olympia's Karen Fraser), introduced the Senate Joint Memorial 8016, which petitioned Congress to begin impeachment investigations of the President and Vice President.

Working with the impeachment group from the Eastside Fellowship of Reconciliation in Bellevue (which morphed into Washington for Impeachment), we began a lobbying effort. This included giving legislators a copy of *How to Impeach a President*. We went office to office, speaking primarily with staff. Many were supportive and planned to attend the town hall meeting.

Over 500 people attended a rally before the hearing on March 1. The overflow crowd filled three rooms to hear eloquent and heartfelt testimony against the Iraq escalation and for impeachment. Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson and former Army Col. Ann Wright were among the speakers who supported impeachment.

Unlike the misinformation stated in an *Olympian* editorial opposing impeachment, if the legislature passed this memorial, it would go to the floor of the US House of Representatives and be treated as if a US Representative had initiated it. That is the US House Rule.

The greatest surprise was when Sen. Patty Murray (D) and Rep. Jay Inslee (D) came to Olympia to stop impeachment. When two state representatives proposed a companion bill to SJM 8016, Murray said that she did not want them to do that. It would make her life harder and harder for the Democrats' agenda. Frank Chopp, chair of the Democratic Caucus, agreed and that was the end of the House companion bill. The Democratic leadership in the Senate, led by Sen. Lisa Brown, fell into line too. Murray and Inslee have since denied that they came to the state legislature to lobby against impeachment. They were there, they said, to meet with their representatives, just like any citizen. Right.

As it turned out, the hearing was held one day after the cutoff date. Only bills considered before the cutoff would come to the floor for a vote. Our efforts shifted to trying to get the bill revived for a vote. Again, there were massive emailing and phone calls to the legislators. Staff told us that they received more emails about impeachment than any other issue this session. It was an uphill battle. It required a two-thirds vote to suspend the cutoff bill, and no one was willing to even try.

The effort to pass an impeachment resolution in this legislative session ended on April 19. Over 100 people rallied on the Capitol steps before taking seats in the gallery to watch a symbolic debate.

While it was not really a debate, it was unusual for Senators to speak on the floor about anything other than bills under consideration. Senator Oemig spoke first, saying that the legislature should not be afraid to face the truth—the truth about the deception that took us into Iraq, about the violation of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution to every person, and about the use of torture. All of these actions, he said, undermine the Constitution and our rights. It must be challenged.

> Staff told us that they received more emails about impeachment than any other issue this session.

Republican Sen. Dan Swecker spoke next. He did not defend the President or the President's actions. He also did not dispute the truth that Oemig outlined. Instead he said that foreign policy is a national issue, and it was an inappropriate topic for the legislature to debate. "It's not what we are elected to do," he said.

Democratic Senator Adam Kline stood up next and spoke from his own experience as an antiwar activist 40 years ago. We have forgotten the lessons learned from Vietnam, he stated. He objected to the deception used by this administration to take us into Iraq. He ended, saying, "There will always be evil in the world. Our fault is for tolerating it."

When Senator Eide called for a recess, thus stopping further statements, the crowd expressed its disapproval. Some chanted, "Impeach! Impeach!" while others yelled "Do your job!" State troopers and legislative guards moved quickly to silence people, but everyone was already leaving as they continued to voice their displeasure.

While we did not get the actions we wanted, we were very successful in getting impeachment on the public's table. We got a bill submitted and a hearing, which is huge for a fledgling group. April 19 was closure for SJM 8016, but we used it to send a message: We are not going away! We will see the legislators in their districts. If it is necessary to come back next session, we will be bigger, stronger, and smarter about the legislative process. We will not be stopped. No one, not even a President, gets to take away our rights and violate laws without being held accountable.

What is next? We will return to the cities to ask them to make a decision about impeachment. We will continue to send our message to our Congressional delegation, most of whom have refused to meet with us face to face. Every member of our Congressional delegation opposes impeachment. We have minds to change.

Impeachment rally on the Capitol steps, March 1. (Photo by Scott Yoos)

A number of legislative districts have endorsed impeachment resolutions, including the San Juan County Democrats Central Committee, Grays Harbor Democratic Party, and King County Democrats, as well as Legislative Districts 1, 32, 34, 36, 37, 41, 43, 44, and 45. The Thurston County Democrats voted against endorsing an impeachment resolution, but we will go back to them. More minds to change.

This is a grassroots movement. We plan to continue to provide information and engage people in this process. If you want to join us, have ideas or can gather a few people in your home to watch *The Constitution in Crisis* or *How to Impeach a President*, please contact us. We have information posted on our website, *www.citizensimpeach.org*. If you just want to be alerted to impeachment actions (like when to show up to a city council meeting), please join our action alert listserve on our website.

As Elizabeth de la Vega put it, "I miss the Constitution and I want it back."

Gail Johnson is affiliated with the Citizens' Movement to Impeach Bush/Cheney. She can be reached by email at impeachbush@riseup.net *or by phone at 360-786-1246. Visit the website at* www.citizensimpeach.org.

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JUDGMENT DAY FOR RALPH'S:

The pharmacy board supports women's access to emergency contraception

by Janet Blanding

A recent Board of Pharmacy decision to adopt new rules requiring pharmacies to fill all prescriptions means a different kind of Judgment Day is looming for the owners of Ralph's Thriftway Pharmacy.

Soon, the Pharmacy Board will be deciding what disciplinary action is appropriate for Ralph's, based on its flagrant refusal to conform to state pharmacy regulations. Ralph's Thriftway (along with its sister store, Bayview Thriftway) has been the object of a community boycott since July 2006, due to its refusal to carry emergency contraception, supposedly "for moral reasons."

In July 2006, nine complaints against Ralph's were filed by women whose prescriptions for Plan B emergency contraception were refused; resolution of these complaints is expected some time in May.

According to Lisa Salmi, Executive Director of the Washington State Board of Pharmacy, an investigation into the complaints against Ralph's has been concluded, and a member of the Board of Pharmacy is now reviewing the complaints prior to presenting them to the entire Board, which will make a decision on what disciplinary action is appropriate. The Board has the power to revoke Ralph's Thriftway Pharmacy's pharmacy license if they are found to be out of compliance with state pharmacy regulations.

A code the public can live with

Women's advocacy groups such as the Northwest Women's Law Center and NARAL, along with Governor Christine Gregoire, worked closely with the Board of Pharmacy to craft a "Pharmacist's Responsibility Rule," after a disastrous rule was proposed at the Pharmacy Board meeting of June 1, 2006. The rule would have allowed a pharmacist to refuse to fill any prescription for any reason. Most certainly, it would have allowed pharmacists whose religious leaders had duped them into regarding emergency contraception as an abortifacient to refuse to fill prescriptions for Plan B.

Although evangelical Christians and conservative Catholic organizations were delighted with this proposed rule, the majority of the public responded negatively, and the Board of Pharmacy received thousands of communications from the public, objecting to the proposed code.

Responding to this pressure, and with the assistance of the governor and women's advocates, new rules were devised, which were unanimously adopted on April 12, 2007, at the Board of Pharmacy meeting in Tumwater. This new code, which will allow a pharmacist or pharmacy tech to refuse to fill a prescription or to dispense a drug only if another member of the pharmacy staff can fill it on the spot, will take effect in mid-June.

Compliance with current stocking regulations

The newly adopted code does not require a pharmacy to stock emergency contraception; that is because stocking is required by existing code, and has been all along. The current code that requires pharmacies to stock an array of drugs to "meet the pharmaceutical needs of its patients" was the basis of the complaints filed against Ralph's, and has not changed.

> Refusing to meet the pharmaceutical needs of women who need birth control is not a moral act.

The new code does, however, refer to the existing code, when it spells out expectations for pharmacies when they are unable to dispense medication to a patient due to "unavailability of drug or device despite good faith compliance with WAC 246.869.150."

In these instances, the pharmacy is now required to contact the prescriber to obtain authorization to provide a therapeutically equivalent product. Where emergency contraception is concerned, the doctor may simply prescribe a large dose of regular birth control pills, which are exactly the same chemically, and therefore therapeutically, as emergency contraception. The Ralph's Thriftway pharmacy does stock levonorgestrel, the active ingredient in Plan B, in daily doses. It is unlikely, however, that Ralph's would be willing to comply with the new code, as they have clearly demonstrated over the last year their willingness to defy current regulations.

The Board of Pharmacy held a public hearing on March 29 to hear comments on the proposed code. As it was held on a workday at 9 AM, it was difficult for ordinary working people to attend—I was the only woman from Olympia who had filed a complaint who was able to show up and testify about my experience of being unable to fill a prescription for Plan B. The Archdiocese of Seattle, however, had rented a bus, and droves of anti-choice Catholics and evangelical Christians, mostly retirees, showed up to share their two cents' worth.

Many of them were more willing than able. There was some confusion over how to complete the sign-in sheets. So many of the rules' opponents erroneously indicated that they were present to support the new rules—rather than oppose it—that the hearing had to be stopped. Members and staffers of the Board of Pharmacy had to carefully explain the implications of the rules, and sign-in sheets had to be recirculated so that the bussed-in opponents could register correctly.

The new rules can be a little confusing, as they allow a pharmacist to step aside in filling prescriptions, but require the pharmacy to ensure that they are filled. (It should be noted that Plan B emergency contraception is now available to women 18 and over without a prescription, although its distribution is restricted to pharmacies. The new code covers both prescription drugs and devices, and drugs and devices whose distribution is restricted to pharmacies. The new rules apply to Plan B as well as medications that are sold only by prescription.)

Members of the public had trouble getting this straight, and several times members of the Board of Pharmacy were asked, "What box do I check if I support the pharmacist's right of conscience?" The new code was patiently explained several times, but the nuances were difficult for some hearing attendees to grasp, and grumbling was heard to the effect of, "They're trying to confuse us."

Existing code requires that Plan B be stocked

At one point, a confused emergency contraception opponent stood and asked, "What box do I check if I don't think the pharmacy should have to carry Plan B?" A Pharmacy Board staffer replied that the code under consideration did not specifically address the issue of stocking medications, because existing code already requires that a pharmacy stock emergency contraception if its clientele includes women of child-bearing age. The stunned anti-choicer expressed disbelief and indignation, but the staff member patiently maintained her position, and moved on to the next question.

Approximately 250 people were present at the hearing, where each speaker was limited to two minutes. My speech chiefly consisted of a list of women who were refused prescriptions for Plan B at pharmacies in Olympia and Lacey, a total of 17 incidents in all. My list was so long that I didn't have time to say much else.

What made it particularly satisfying to share this information was that three of the speakers who preceded me, speaking against the proposed code, had stated that the new code was unnecessary because there hadn't been any actual incidents of refusal at pharmacies. My list of nine women, four pharmacies, and 17 separate incidents of refusal, complete with names and dates, clearly refuted their contention.

Co-opting the language of the left

At the public hearing, I was seated next to a man who was seemingly opposed to the new rule on religious grounds. He applaud ed speakers who opposed the proposed code on religious and moral grounds and laughed loudly at their attempts at humor. However, when it was his turn to speak, religious objections to the new code were not discussed. Instead, he introduced himself as a pharmacist and pharmacy owner, and decried the new code as "discriminatory," complaining that it would have a "disparate impact" on small business owners such as himself, as he would be forced to hire other personnel to dispense emergency contraception when the pharmacist on duty was unwilling to do so on the basis of conscience. This tactic of co-opting the language of the left was reminiscent of the many speakers at the legislative hearings for the domestic partnership bills who complained that granting some rights to same sex couples amounted to discrimination.

Language is important. Opponents of emergency contraception have repeated the lie that emergency contraception is an abortifacient so many times that many people think that Plan B is the same as RU-486, or the "abortion pill." It is not; RU-486 works after a pregnancy is established, and is available only in clinics, while Plan B will not affect an existing pregnancy and is distributed without a prescription through pharmacies.

In a dismaying recent Supreme Court decision, a ban on late-term abortions was upheld. These abortions are often referred to in the media as "partial birth abortions," although that term has no meaning from either a medical or legal standpoint. The Supreme Court's majority decision showed a disheartening propensity to use right-wing phraseology to discuss abortion—for instance, referring to a fetus as a "baby," and a "child."

It is important to be wary of the manipulative use of language surrounding choice issues: A D&X ("dilation & extraction") abortion is not "partial birth." Emergency contraception is not an "abortion pill." Requiring pharmacists to fill valid prescriptions—in essence requiring them to do their job—does not amount to "discrimination." Most of all, refusing to meet the pharmaceutical needs of women who need birth control, because of birth control failure or possibly because they were coerced into sexual activity, is not a "moral" act.

Clea Partridge and others picketing outside of Ralph's Thriftway. (Photo by Jim Mayfield)

▸ **Rafah** continued from page 1

On the *Olympian*'s online comments section, Litwin claimed official status would make ORSCP an arm of the city government, which is disingenuous, as no one assumes that the organization that maintains Olympia's sister city relationship with Kato City, the Olympia-Yashiro Sister City Association, is an arm of the city government.

Also attempting to discredit ORSCP was Rabbi Seth Goldstein of Temple Beth Hatfiloh, who quoted an excerpt from ORSCP's bylaws, about "demonstrat[ing] solidarity in a common struggle for a just and prompt peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." Goldstein somehow intepreted this to mean that the City Council and the people of Olympia would be forced to "stand in solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people in whatever form that stuggle takes," which is not what the bylaws state.

The divisiveness argument

One of the most frequently evoked arguments against the sister city proposal was its supposed divisiveness. It was this "divisiveness" that convinced the City Council members to reject the proposal. In fact, the supposedly divisive nature was mentioned so frequently at the City Council meeting that it was often left unqualified, thus leading to a circular argument: "I disagree with the proposal; therefore it is divisive. It is divisive; therefore I disagree with the proposal."

Divisiveness itself should be granted little weight, as it does not address the quality of an argument. Rather than directly arguing with an issue, one is merely dimissing the issue on the basis that it is potentially arguable and simply for the sake that not everyone agrees. Politicians frequently accuse their opponents of being divisive in order to demonize their opponents and also to frame themselves as being above the petty arguments. Thus George Bush campaigned under the role of the "uniter, not the divider."

That is also why the divisiveness stance was so popular among the opponents of the sister city proposal, who had so little to criticize about the specific actions that would be conducted under a sister city.

The divisiveness argument is a rhetorical tool to dismiss the opposition without addressing the opposition's points. It also fails to account for the possibility that one side disagrees simply because that side is wrong. Thus arguments against the sister city proposal were based on misinformation and racial stereotypes were valid enough to qualify as divisive.

Additionally, the nature of the divisiveness was never explained. If the divisiveness was split along the lines of the Palestine–Israel conflict, then one would assume that the proponents of the sister city would object to an Israeli sister city, which was not the case. In fact, several proponents of the Rafah sister city welcomed a proposal for an Israeli sister city. Thus the divisiveness came solely from the parties opposed to the Rafah sister city and not from the proponents.

Amidst the rhetoric of "divisiveness," what the opposing City Councilmembers failed to consider was the *greater diversity* of the people in support of the proposal. In a letter to the City Council, Thurston County PUD Commissioner Alan Corwin had implied that ORSCP had not made an effort "to include a cross section of people in Olympia" and that they "represent[ed] a narrow constituency." In fact, ORSCP had secured a large number of endorsements within the community, and supporters who spoke had come from diverse backgrounds, Jewish, Muslim, several Christian denominations, and ethnic backgrounds, and even represented a broader age group. Despite Corwin's claims, the 50 supporting speakers were much more diverse than the 24 who opposed the project.

In March, Corwin had stated that he would "mobilize the Jewish community and others" to oppose the sister city proposal. However, by the time of the public hearing, there were approximately 13 or 14 Jews who spoke against the proposal, compared to 9 Jews who spoke in favor—not a significant difference. It could be said, then, that the "Jewish community" was itself divided on the issue.

Who opposed the proposal?

Of the 24 who spoke in opposition, the majority, about 13 or 14, were opposed because it conflicted with their individual Jewish identity. Three seemed to be Christian Zionists who opposed the proposal because they believe it is their religious duty to defend Israel. Among the Christian Zionists was a "prayer board" member of Daniel's House of Prayer and the fundamentalist Westwood Baptist Church, which hosts a "Watchmen for Israel" program. There was also a woman who presented herself as a "Bible-believing Christian who deeply loves and supports the Jewish people."

Three or four opponents were non-Jewish right wingers, such as Dan Cathers, chairman of the Thurston County Republicans. Three days before the City Council meeting, Cathers sent an email to fellow area Republicans to come and oppose the linkage with a city "so closely aligned with terrorism," suggesting that the Olympia City Council might "embrace the terrorists of Hamas." His call produced very little turnout.

Amidst the rhetoric of "divisiveness," what the opposing City Councilmembers failed to consider was the *greater diversity* of the people in support of the proposal.

Another right winger who spoke in opposition was Tumwater resident Jeff Brigham, who is known to the local progressive community for staging small counterprotests at many demonstrations, such as the Ehren Watada rallies and the Thriftway boycott, usually with a sign that says "God bless Israeli bulldozers," in reference to Rachel Corrie's killing. "God bless the bulldozer that ran over her and God bless the driver for the good work he did!" Brigham once wrote. (Ironically, the sign evokes the reprehensible tactics of Fred Phelps, whose followers attend funerals of US soldiers with signs that say "God bless IEDs.") In fact Brigham produced one of the strangest non sequiturs during the City Council meeting when, instead of explaining his opposition to the sister city proposal, simply listed off several Israeli women who were killed by Palestinians and who were united by sharing a first name, "Rachel."

Also representing the extreme right was Terry Schrader from Centralia, a volunteer with the xenophobic vigilante group, the Minutemen. He was present with his partner, Mimi Silver, who wore a "Tzahal" (Israeli military) T-shirt. Both of them share xenophobic fears that the United States is "becoming a third world nation" due to a mass influx of "illegals."

An Israeli sister city?

Many opposing speakers suggested a relationship with an Israeli sister city to "balance" the Palestinian sister city relationship. Dan Cathers encouraged ORSCP "to work with many of the people that have already said tonight they would be willing to help find an appropriate Israeli city and form a trilateral sister city arrangement." What he failed to notice was that no one actually volunteered to work on forming an Israeli sister city. The closest thing to a volunteer was Evergreen and St. Martins faculty Sherri Shulman, who said she was "very willing to work on finding a compatible city in the West Bank or in Gaza as well as one in Israel," implying that she personally would not accept a sister city with Rafah, even in a trilateral relationship.

Although ORSCP has publicly stated that it would support an Israeli sister city and is willing to share information on establishing such a relationship, no one expressed a willingness to actually make it a reality. And since the Olympia City Council has rejected the Rafah proposal, none of the proponents for an Israeli sister city have followed up or taken the initiative. This would indicate that the argument for an Israeli sister city was merely rhetorical, another tool used to indirectly reject the Rafah sister city proposal. Once it served its purpose, the tool was dropped. As long as no Israeli sister city is pursued, the Rafah sister city has no chance of receiving greater approval from the City Council, and the Rafah sister city project is completely at the mercy of its opponents.

Making an Israeli sister city a condition for having a Palestinian sister city is itself chauvinistic, if not downright racist, as it implies that Israel owns the Palestinians, and that the Palestinians are not allowed to express themselves without Israeli approval. Hence this type of ownership becomes an extension of Israel's physical occupation of the Palestinians.

An extension of the occupation

All expressions of Palestinian humanity in the west have to be approved by people claiming to represent the Israeli side or claiming to be the "Jewish community," for the sake of "balance." This includes not only political and historical expressions, but also cultural. The following are examples of how Palestinian narratives and experiences are regulated in the name of "balance" or "Jewish sensitivities."

In 2004, an art exhibit by Palestinian-American Emily Jacir was scheduled to appear at Wichita State University's Ulrich Museum in Wichita, Kansas. The exhibit, entitled "Where We Come From," documented the artist fulfilling the wishes of Palestinians who were unable to return home or to visit their loved ones. The wishes ranged from ,"Go to Haifa play soccer with the first Palestinian boy you see," to, "Go to...Jerusalem and pay my phone bill," to, "Visit my mother, hug and kiss her." One Wichita rabbi denounced the work as "outrageously inflammatory... a blatant anti-Semitic attempt to breed hatred." The Jewish Federation of Kansas demanded that they be allowed to place their own poster and literature outside the gallery in order to "balance" out the exhibit. The museum director refused, so the Federation appealed to the University administration, who approved it without even looking at the proposed literature. Proponents of artistic expression criticized the administration's willingness to modify the art exhibit at the expense of the artist, and the administration eventually reversed their decision. However, protesters distributed leaflets outside the gallery denouncing the exhibit as "a hate filled, inflammatory, anti-Israel display." (excerpts from the exhibit are available online: *www.universes-in-universe.de/islam/eng/2003/04/jacir*)

Also in 2004, an art exhibition entitled "Made in Palestine" faced similar controversy in New York, when a state assemblyman, Ryan Karber, called on Westchester County officials to cancel the exhibit, claiming that the artwork was "distasteful and divisive" and were "offensive to me as a Jew, as an American, and as a civilized human being." Unsurprisingly, Karber had not yet seen the exhibit. Karber's objections were joined by another state legislator and two county legislators, with support from local Jewish groups. Palestinian-American Remi Kanazi, writing about the controversy over the exhibit, noted, "Israel is not the subject of these works; Palestinian experience is." One of the artists in the exhibit, Palestinian-American Samia Halaby, stated, "People allow the mass media to fill their head with a discourse that is not their own experience. Lacking knowledge of Palestine and of Palestinian experience, they assume that the propaganda that fills the airways and their heads is reality. They see what Israel has created and publicizes—Palestinians who are poor people wearing rags, suffering malnutrition, and throwing stones. They do not see our history and do not know who we are." Elsewhere, Halaby noted, "It's very, very, hard for a person who's not paying extraordinary attention to know that there is a very ancient society and culture among Palestinians that is both interesting and enriching."

In 2005, a Montreal library received complaints over an exhibit of photographs by Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, who had been tortured to death by Iranian police in 2003. Out of 23 photos that depicted her travels to Iran, Afghanistan, and Palestine, the library, responding to complaints that the exhibit was "anti-Israel," removed five photographs that depicted scenes of Palestinians. The captions accompanying the photos stated that Kazemi "illustrated the daily life of Palestinians and the problems they faced as they sought to preserve their land and their identity." When Kazemi's son demanded that the library display all the photos or display none of them, the library chose the latter. Montreal's Jewish Alliance Against the Occupation criticized the library's censorship and

Photos left to right: Olympia delegates with the Nasrallah family in Olympia.Fida Qishta teaching Arabic to children at Brown Elementary in Olympia; the Nasrallah family in Olympia. Photos by Kareen Nasrallah and Ron Eggleton.

stated, "A library, of all places, is a place where all opinions, different opinions, are aired." Ironically, Kazemi was killed after allegedly taking photos unacceptable by the Iranian government.

At Brandeis University in May 2006, an exhibit of art created by Palestinian children and organized by a Jewish Israeli student at Brandeis was removed without her knowledge, following several complaints that it was "one-sided."

In 2004, a Swedish art installation seeking to examine the rationale of Palestinian suicide bombers, and created by two artists, one of whom was a Jew raised in Israel, was vandalized by the Israeli ambassador to Sweden, an act that was supported by then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The Los Angeles–based Simon Wiesenthal Center then initiated a campaign to bombard the Swedish prime minister's office with email to remove the art installation, incorrectly claiming that it glorified a "Palestinian homicide bomber."

There are two sides to the Palestinian story: the Palestinian side and the non-Palestinian (i.e., the Israeli, or, in some contexts, the "Jewish") side. In the United States, the non-Palestinian side has precedence and defines the Palestinian narrative. Many of the opponents to the sister city proposal used arguments that were provided to them by the Israeli government. Thus Rafah is a "gateway to terror," as one person explained it at the City Council hearing, because that is how Israel defined it in May 1994, in order to justify the military invasion dubbed "Operation Rainbow," which demolished 166 homes, killed 44 Palestinians (overwhelmingly civilian), and destroyed half the city's roads. In that time period, all Israeli military and governmental spokespersons coordinated their message by stating that "Rafah is the gateway to terror." The purpose of the military operation was ostensibly to destroy weapons-smuggling tunnels, but the actual pattern of destruction indicated that the real purpose was to create a larger Palestinian-free "buffer zone" between Rafah and Egypt.

All we need to know about Rafah comes from Israel's narrative: there are tunnels underneath. Weapons are smuggled. Rockets are fired. Terrorism. Violence. Hatred toward Jews. It serves Israel's purposes to control both sides of the story.

This definition of Rafah is even physical, as the former Israeli settlement of Morag was strategically built between the two Palestinian cities of Rafah of Khan Younis to disrupt the Palestinian social fabric (Ariel Sharon referred to the strategic placement of settlements such as Morag as "Jewish 'fingers'"). Northwest of Rafah, the Gush Katif settlement bloc restricted access to the Mediterranean coast. Southwest of Rafah, Israel's "buffer zone" between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, known as the "Philadelphi Corridor," was widened by destroying the neighborhoods closest to the zone.

Rafah has always been defined by Israel.

By accepting the divisiveness argument, the City Council legitimized the racist stereotypes offered by the opponents of the Rafah sister city. The City Council's role as leaders is not to avoid divisive subjects. It didn't deter them from passing the quite divisive sidewalk ordinance. But in this case, they opted for the safer decision of maintaining the status quo, which means maintaining the one-dimensional portrayal of Palestinians, of Arabs and Muslims. The opponents to the sister city proposal expressed their desire to remain ignorant, to be allowed to feel safe in their fear of the Other, and to not have to reach out and accept the humanity of a a people that they've learned to reject.

I am reminded of the Olympia Artswalk in spring 2006, when Fida Qishta visited Olympia as a delegate from Rafah. Crossing the street downtown, a couple of young men noticed Fida's headscarf and shouted "Terrorist!" at her as they walked by. Many opponents of the Rafah sister city have claimed that the people of Rafah do not deserve to have a connection with Olympia, but perhaps the reverse is more accurate.

An email from Rafah

The following email was sent by Khaled Nasrallah from Rafah, Palestine. It was the Nasrallah family's home that Rachel Corrie was protecting when she was killed by an Israeli military bulldozer. The home was destroyed months later, with no rationale provided by the Israeli military.

Khaled Nasrallah visited Olympia in 2005. He and other Palestinians viewed the April 17 Olympia City Council meeting on the Internet.

Dear all Olympia Rafah Sister City,

It was my pleasure to see all of you on the meeting with the Olympia council regarding to convince them to approve our dream of start the legal form of the ORSCP as a bonus of your great work you did. It was fantastic efforts you all did, and we are in Rafah very proud of you, and sure will all continue struggling in both sides to achieve our dream whom Rachel started it alone, but now thousands of people heard about, even thousand support or participate.

Please do not disappointed, as what happened was great success to reach this level even we fail this time for unknown reasons against the logic and law.

Love and peace from Rafah to all of you,

Khaled

From Palestine to Virginia Tech

by Sami Awad

On April 16, a tragic event took place in Virginia Tech in the US that shocked not only the people of the United States but people all across the globe. A violent massacre took place there that resulted in thirty-two killed, individuals who presented different cultures, religions, and nationalities. In a sign of solidarity the people of Palestine in general and those from the couthern villages surrounding the Holy city of Bethlehem dedicated their weekly nonviolent activity against the building of Apartheid wall to the families of the victims of the Virginia Tech massacre.

Every Friday, Palestinians, internationals, and Israeli nonviolent activists gather in the southern villages of Bethlehem to protest against the building of the Apartheid Wall that will eventually destroy the livelihood of these villages. This Friday, the protest began with a silent procession by the group of about fifty participants. We carried banners and leaflets with the Virginia Tech logo and statements supporting them in this time of pain. Thirty-two olive trees were also carried in the procession to remember each person killed in the massacre. The olive tree is a global symbol of peace and hope.

Once we reached the path created by the bulldozers for the building of the Apartheid Wall, we dug the earth and planted the thirty-two olive trees in a row—instead of building an ugly wall that divides people, let us plant trees that bring people together. Several of the participants made statements condemning the violence that we all—as the human family—are witnessing, and condemning the building of the Apartheid wall and the killing of innocents.

Over 150 Israeli soldiers came to dismantle our protest. Our commitment to nonviolence and to achieve our goal completely paralyzed their weapons and their goals, and eventually our power made them withdraw. The planting of the trees was followed by reciting the names of all those who were killed in the Virginia massacre, followed by a fifteen minute period of silence before the group moved back to the villages.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said "where there is an injustice somewhere... there is an injustice everywhere." This also means that where there is violence somewhere there is violence everywhere. We need to work for peace somewhere so that peace can also spread everywhere.

Sami Awad is the executive director of the Holy Land Trust, based in Bethlehem, Palestine. The Holy Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to fostering the principles of democracy and nonviolent resistance in order to end the Israeli Occupation and empower the Palestinian community.

Video footage of the tree-planting ceremony is available online at Awad's blog, samiawad.wordpress.com.

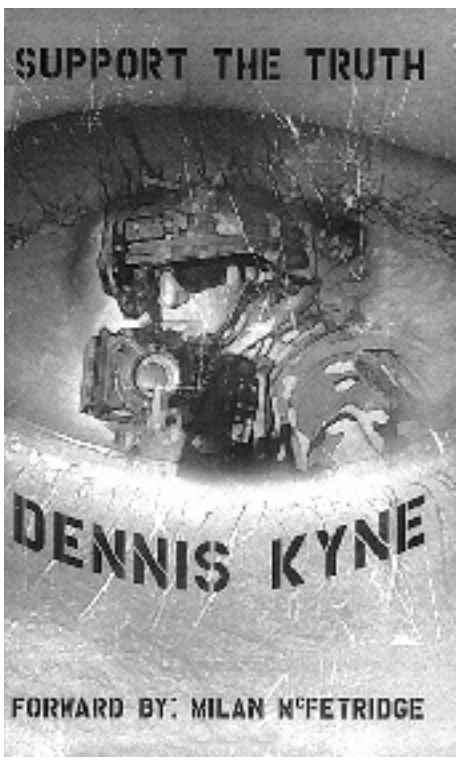
On April 20, the Holy Land Trust and the Popular Committee Against the Wall dedicated their weekly nonviolent resistance to the victims of the Virginia Tech massacre. Thirty-two olive trees were planted on the land of the village Joret Asham'a, which will soon be expropriated by Israel's Wall. The Palestinians were joined by Israeli and international activists, as Israeli soldiers surrounded and videotaped them.

Support the truth: Depleted Uranium disclosed

by Daisy Ouye

For me, 9/11, the death of Rachel Corrie, and the invasion of Iraq brought about an awakening. Up until then I knew little about Middle East history and culture. I realized I had a responsibility as an American to try to understand the circumstances surrounding and leading up to our nation's, and the world's current state. No small undertaking, to be sure.

I reflected back on the 1991 invasion of Iraq, which occurred a year after I graduated high school. People who were very close to me were deployed. They were deeply affected by the conditions there. Like many veterans, it was not something they could easily talk about. My friends also came home with physical illnesses. At the time ,I was just happy because they were back. I was not at all educated on why my loved ones were in Iraq or what really went on there. They were back, but they weren't the same.



I believed the US was there to protect the freedom of Kuwait. This is what Americans were told. It made us proud to believe it. I now know the invasion of Iraq in 1991 was to protect US interest in Saudi oil.

After 9/11, the Bush administration began a buildup to another invasion of Iraq. I, like many Americans, sought independent news sources, because corporate-controlled mainstream media was part of the web of profiteers who were lobbying strongly for an unjust invasion. Iraq is a country with no connection to the tragic events of 9/11.

Media like *Democracy Now!*, *Free Speech Radio News*, and *Works In Progress* became invaluable to my partner D and I. We read eye-opening books by people like Howard Zinn, Derrick Jensen and Arundhati Roy. We began attending community events to learn more on a grassroots level.

Being especially inspired by the dedication and courage of Olympia's own Rachel Corrie, we continued to learn as much as we could. While I was attending an Olympia–Rafah Sister City Project event, Veterans For Peace offered a book by former Army Sgt. Dennis J. Kyne called *Support The Truth*.

Dennis' book gave me insight into the Gulf War of 1991. He was there, and he, too, came home sick. He was also diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome (GWS), like one of my friends. Another friend of mine simply had "undiagnosed illnesses". Obviously they *all* had undiagnosed illnesses.

As I read Sgt. Kyne's book, symptoms and ailments kept matching up to the ones my friends suffered. Among them: joint and muscle pain, kidney pain, nausea, stomach problems, restrictive airway, headaches, neurological disorders, and uranium in semen. Other symptoms include gum problems, vision degradation, night vision loss, skin irritations, cancer, lymphoma, organ cancers and birth defects in offspring.

It was like all the lights turned on at once. It was radiation sickness. A photo on the back cover of the book, I now realized, looked eerily similar to a number of photos a friend had taken and brought back from Iraq.

He captured the images on what was known as the "Highway of Death." This wasn't seen in mainstream media because these were photos of bodies hit by nuclear flash. Bodies of retreating Iraqis killed by US nuclear missiles, known as depleted uranium.

A byproduct of uranium enrichment, depleted uranium (DU) has 60% the radiation of refined uranium. It is ground into microscopic particles and used in various US weaponry. Because it is radioactive, upon impact, nuclear flash vaporizes, melts, and destroys all life. The particles are released and remain airborne for 4.5 billion years and continue to emit dangerous alpha rays.

My friend, the soldier who took those pictures, had to have breathed depleted uranium particles into his lungs, ingested them, swallowed them. Now these tiny atomic bombs are inside of him.

I now know that DU is the definitive cause of Gulf War Syndrome, as determined by nuclear scientist and whistleblower, Loren Moret. But it had taken me so long to learn the truth. I also discovered that the US was, again, using DU in Iraq. D and I knew that we wanted to help raise awareness on this issue.

D composed a two-song CD about the current so-called "War On Terror" with specific information about DU. For the most part, we've traded CDs for donations, directly with people we knew. During this process we got the opportunity to talk with many people about these munitions. I have become convinced that there are many in our community suffering their effects.

I've learned about local Gulf War Vets diagnosed with GWS. One has developed lung cancer. One is currently hospitalized with chronic pain and breathing problems. I've learned from someone who just returned from Iraq that her doctor called her new lung condition "the Baghdad Crud." I've learned that people are concerned about illnesses they've seen in returning soldiers and possible transmission to offspring. I've learned that people don't know much about DU because it's a huge cover-up.

Sgt. Dennis Kyne was a powerful witness at the Citizens' Hearing on the Legality of US Actions in Iraq, held in Tacoma in January, in which a distinguished group of experts testified to the illegality of the current Iraq invasion. DU is classified as a weapon of mass destruction by the UN and the European Union. Its use is illegal under all international law.

We must learn the lessons of this recent history. Could DU be the reason 11,000 Gulf War Vets have died and cancer has increased tenfold in Iraq since the Gulf War? The US used 320 tons of DU in the first invasion. US Strategic Command admits to using 2000 tons so far in the current invasion. Its use continues.

George W. Bush has finally agreed to an investigation of the effects of DU on US soldiers and their offspring. At the same time US military officials claim lack of proper prescreening makes it impossible to know if a soldier's conditions are preexisting. This gives one little faith in any sort of government investigation. The only solution is to ban all depleted uranium munitions.

By the government's own reasoning, DU cannot be proven safe. Evidence is overwhelming. We must support the truth.

For more information about Dennis Kyne, his book or CDs go to DennisKyne.com.

D K Ouye's CD, Immortal/Solidarity—Come Back Home*, is available at Traditions Fair Trade, Dumpster Values and Rec the Place. For a free copy contact us at* dkouye@comcast.net.

The Iraqi civilian casualty number — how many?

by Janine Gates

Lots of numbers about Iraqi civilian deaths are thrown around. All the numbers are big, so it's hard to know what number is most accurate. Fifty thousand? One hundred thousand? Five hundred thousand? It depends on the source.

I used the number 650,000 in my article, "Lt. Watada speaks out in Olympia" in the February issue of *Works in Progress*. That number was used in a video about Iraq prior to Lt. Watada's speaking enagagement at South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) on January 31. The video said that an estimated 650,000 Iraqi civilians have died; however, the number was not attributed to any source.

After publication, I questioned the 650,000 figure. The figure especially bothered me after reading an article by Kathy Kelly, co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, published in the same *Works in Progress* issue. In her article, Kelly stated that, according to the United Nations, 700,000 Iraqi refugees have fled to Jordan since the war began. Another incredibly high number.

In an email, Kelly said the 650,000 figure is credible and suggested that I stay in touch with statistics offered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at *www.unhcr.org*. She also referred me to the Johns Hopkins University study published by the British medical journal *The Lancet*, which put the Iraqi civilian death toll at 100,000 as of October 30, 2004.

David Hyde, sociologist at South Puget Sound Community College and the academic advisor for the organization that sponsored the Watada event, said the video came from a DVD called, *Through the Eyes of Children: Iraq 2003*.

I contacted David Lynn, a photojournalist and Vietnam veteran who lives in Union, Washington, whose company, Groundview Productions, made the video. A project sponsored by Pacifica Radio station KPFK, Los Angeles, and the International Human Shields Movement, the video is featured on Lynn's website, *www.groundviewproductions.org*.

The updated video at its end refers to the Johns Hopkins study, quoting, "Since the initial bombing and invasion of Iraq, over 100,000 civilians, mostly women and children, have died.—Johns Hopkins University, Lancet 10-30-04."

A board member of The Humanitarian Law Project (*hlp.home.igc.org*), David Lynn has documented war zones in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Mexico, and Iraq. Lynn, who just returned from six weeks in Eastern Chad, says he knows he "should update the DVD and the number of civilian deaths in Iraq... (At the time) when I made the video...it was soon after the first John Hopkins report of 100,000 came out."

> "When I was there I saw many civilian bodies being buried where they fell without anyone documenting numbers or names," Lynn says.

Clarifying the source and date of the casualty figure as he did on his website is helpful. However, updating the casualty number may not be necessary, as the 650,000 figure may now be correct.

A second study released in October 2006 by the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health now places the current casualty count at over 650,000 Iraqi civilian deaths. The study, based primarily on a country-wide household survey concluded in July 2006, is detailed at *www.jhsph.edu/refugee/research/iraq*.

Lynn agrees with the 650,000 figure. But what about all the other numbers?

"The number of civilian deaths in Iraq is a difficult one. First of all, the US military refuses to document such numbers. When I was there I saw many civilian bodies being buried where they fell without anyone documenting numbers or names," Lynn says. This activity is explored in the study, explaining that most Western reporters are based in Baghdad and there is a great deal of violence elsewhere.

As of March 24, the maximum casualty number, 65,246 comes from the website Iraq Body Count (*www.iraqbodycount.net*). Our local newspaper, *The Olympian*, uses this source, and its minimum count of 59,408, in its daily edition.

According to Lynn, Iraq Body Count relies only on deaths reported in the media. "This is very limited and mostly dependent on second hand accounts, since very few journalists are out in the field. The media relies on the Iraq government reports and whatever the US has to say, which both are of course skewed to their own public relations needs," Lynn says.

Lynn, who went to Vietnam as an 18-year-old Marine, says, "Civilian death tolls are bad public relations for the war effort. Therefore, don't rely on anything from the US. The US found out the hard way during Vietnam what such numbers can do to erode support."

Bottom line, there are a lot of Iraqi civilian deaths. How many? Too many.

Janine Gates is a freelance writer and photographer in Olympia, Washington. She can be reached through her website at www.janinegatesphotography.com.

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Baby steps towards building bridges in the community

ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED RESPONDED TO WITH WELCOMING HANDS

by Muhammad Ayub

Most people volunteering to be foot soldiers for the political campaigning of the Republican party have their hearts in the right place; they are God-fearing, patriotic folks who feel that they are doing the right thing. There are not very many opportunities for them to listen and to speak to other people with differing points of views and opinions. This forum was one such opportunity—a tender baby step towards building bridges in the community.

On March 29, the St. Martin's University Young College Republicans Club hosted the showing of the movie Obsession—Radical Islam's War with the West. The panelists and audience in attendance were dismayed and disturbed by the amount of hate, violence, and misconception that was unleashed in such a short time.

> "Why are we making such a big deal out of this movie? Because this is the foundation of the same kind of propaganda lies that were used to justify the Iraq war."

The film has a long list of problems: distortion of reality, maligning of a faith tradition, mistranslations of Arabic, lack of fairness, factual errors, absence of Middle East experts, and the parading of a short list of renowned Muslim-bashers like Daniel Pipes, Steve Emerson and Nonie Darwish. Muhammed Ayub, a local volunteer, commented, "Why are we making such a big deal out of this movie? Because this is the foundation of the same kind of propaganda lies that were used to justify the Iraq war; if we in the peace party had not been sleeping, we could have nipped it in the bud! Now, we need all your help and support to deconstruct the arguments for the upcoming 'new and improved' Iran invasion!"

Unfortunately, the organizers did not provide enough time after the movie for discussion. So Brother Nabil Azouz, the President of the Islamic Center of Olympia, invited the Young Republicans, the peace community, and the whole audience to the local mosque hall to continue the discussion. In organizing the event, the Outreach Committee of the Islamic Center of Olympia enlisted the assistance of several local peace and justice organizations, the local Jewish synagogue, and various Christian churches.

Process of listening

On the evening of April 5, the College Republicans arrived at the mosque. After a brief tour of the facilities and introductions to some local Muslims and the members of the peace community, ground rules and parameters were explained and people were divided into six discussion groups, each with a good mix of Republicans, Jewish visitors, peace movement activists, Muslim hosts and the general public.

The discussion began with each group listening carefully, without judgment, comment, rebuttals or interruptions. All parties were advised to tone down the rhetoric and speak from experience, not from news, emails, political speeches or hearsay. "An enemy is one whose story we have not heard. Please let us choose to communicate bilaterally!" begged Ayub. Two main questions to contemplate were: "What is your greatest concern?" and "What do you most want others to understand about what you need and value?"

The purpose of that night's meeting was for "listening", not "debate" or "dialogue." Participants were asked to speak as individuals, from their own experience. Listening allows the listener to understand and gain insight into the concerns of others. Quiet listening gives the speaker the experience of truly being heard, and can offer an opportunity for further self-reflection without dialogue. Questions are only posed by the speakers themselves for self-reflection purposes. New information may surface.

> One family described how they are now homeschooling their children after their son was called a "terrorist."

The first question, "What is your greatest concern?" prompted diverse answers. People expressed concern about the false portrayals of Muslims and Arabs in the film and how to counter them. It was noted that people should look to Muslims to learn about Islam like we go to Christians to learn about Christianity, and to Jews to learn about Judaism.

There was concern that the movie could increase violence here at home and justify more war in the Middle East. People who believe in violence feed each other in cycles; people in the US don't see how much this country contributes to those cycles. One family described how they are now homeschooling their children after their son was called a "terrorist." People cannot talk to their neighbors easily due to political and religious divisions. "My son believes he is hated."

The second question, "What do you most want others to understand about what you need and value?" showed wide-ranging responses as well. One common theme expressed was that humanity is our common denominator; all life has value. We should recognize our prejudices and replace ignorance with knowledge, understanding and mutual respect. We should avoid making generalizations about groups of people based on religion and other racial or ethnic identifiers.

Rome was not built in a day

Engaging in active listening demonstrated to the participants the hard work and the uphill road that lay ahead of them. Understanding that "peace" is not a spectator sport, some of them resolved to engage in it actively. These were the beginnings of baby steps to cross a chasm of political ideology that seems to have temporarily divided not just the Pacific Northwest, but our entire beloved country. Many concerns and desires for understanding were expressed, but possibly not all in attendance felt truly listened to (or heard). We look forward to improving our "listening without judging skills."

The meeting ended on several positive action items, including promises to continue dialogue, networking and bilateral communications. Many visitors were surprised to find the Muslim faith so close in belief and practice to the Jewish and Christian traditions. Fifty Quran copies and lots of pamphlets were distributed. When the Quran copies ran out, guests were requested to call 1-877-WHY-ISLAM or log onto www.whyislam.org for getting a free Quran in English along with 10 other free educational literatures.

Many folks from the peace and justice organizations suggested that it might be time to shift from protesting downtown to planning such dialogue sessions with people whose opinions and views may be totally different from theirs. Since the Republican Party State Convention is going to be hosted this summer at St. Martin's University, avenues for meaningful exchange of discourse were summarized. Friendships were made, emails exchanged, pictures were posed for—a good sense of love, affection, humanism and cooperative spirit prevailed!

Small group discussions at the mosque. Photo by Marijke van Roojen.

The conclusion to the meeting at the mosque. (Photo by Rik Reynolds)

Two arrested at Indian Island protesting Trident submarine

Bethel Prescott of Irondale, Washington (left) and Liz Rivera Goldstein of Port Townsend were arrested for "disorderly conduct" in front of the Naval Magazine Indian Island gate on Saturday, April 21, while protesting the arrival of the USS Ohio Trident nuclear submarine. Part of the conditions of release for Rivera Goldstein was that she have no contact with Prescott. (photo by Dan Goldstein, Golden Times Photography)

Eighteen people gathered at the Naval Magazine Indian Island gate on the afternoon of Saturday, April 21, to protest the *USS Ohio* Trident nuclear submarine and the war in Iraq. They carried signs saying "No Iraq War", "The Longer We Stay, the Worse it Gets" and "Purge the Urge to Surge", among others. Doug Milholland gave a short speech quoting Abraham Lincoln, President Eisenhower and Martin Luther King, speaking about the danger that militarism poses to our society.

Then protesters walked towards the gate. Milholland drew a large dollar sign with Marinara sauce, symbolizing the blood that has been spilled in American military interventions around the world.

Liz Rivera Goldstein, of Port Townsend, and Bethel Prescott, of Irondale, stood in front of the gate, while the others watched. Both were arrested and charged with "disorderly conduct" by Jefferson County Sheriffs.

Prescott was released later in the afternoon on $250 bail but Rivera Goldstein refused bail and will be held until a hearing Monday morning at the Jefferson County Courthouse, when she will ask the judge to be released on her own recognizance. She said that bail is inappropriate in this case because she is no danger to the community, and will show up in court because she wants to have the opportunity to explain the reasons for her actions.

The *USS Ohio* arrived at Indian Island Thursday afternoon for an expected stay of two or three days. It is one of four Trident submarines that have been retired from their original job carrying ballistic nuclear missile in order to carry cruise missiles capable of carrying either nuclear or non-nuclear warheads. It will be based at Bangor and will load non-nuclear cruise missiles at Indian Island when it returns to base approximately once a year.

This is another expansion of the Indian Island base, which is now the largest munitions depot on the West Coast, shipping munitions to Iraq and to the Pacific fleet. The Ohio will be joined by a second retrofitted Trident submarine and other cruise missile submarines using Indian Island.

It is a beautiful view from the Indian Island Gate. A small park across the road sweeps down to the water's edge. A tree is covered with spring blossoms. It is easy to forget in our rural paradise among the trees the immense suffering caused by US policies and fueled in part by the munitions shipping out from here and by weapons such as the *USS Ohio*.

UPDATE: After refusing bail, Rivera Goldstein was finally released on Monday, April 23, following an arraignment that established excessive penalties under the claim that Rivera Goldstein either could not be trusted to return to court "and/or the defendant poses a substantial threat to the safety of the community."

The conditions of release, according to Rivera Goldstein, are as follows: "I cannot go within 500 yards of Indian Island, and I cannot have any communication with Bethel Prescott, who was arrested with me. The prosecuting attorney asked for travel restrictions to within western Washington, but I asked to have that dropped so I could travel to see my father-in-law, who has been re-diagnosed with cancer. I am flying to California to see him. The judge agreed to drop the travel restriction.

"My attorney was not in court on Monday, but he will be filing motions to have the restrictions dropped. I feel that being held over the weekend, and these conditions of release, are a way of punishing me without a trial. I do not believe I am guilty of breaking any laws. I believe I have a constitutional right and duty to protest against the escalation of the war and occupation of Iraq, increased military aggression around the world, and the increased role of Indian Island in all of this. I do not believe a jury would find me guilty in a trial, and so the prosecution is punishing me before they can fail to get a conviction."

For information on the USS Ohio Trident nuclear submarine, visit dangoldstein.blogspot.com.

Judge orders City of Tacoma to provide police 'rules of engagement'

Prosecutor wants to criminalize backpacks without talking about backpacks

by Mark Jensen

Eighteen persons appeared in Tacoma Municipal Court before Judge Pro Tem Karl D. Haugh on Tuesday, April 24, as the City of Tacoma continues to press charges connected with the Port Militarization Resistance (PMR) antiwar protests at the Port of Tacoma in March 2007. Judge Haugh set May 10 as a motion date for attorneys involved in the case to appear before him to resolve issues around pretrial discovery, and May 23 as the date for another pretrial conference.

Many of the defendants at the hearing were arrested on Sunday, March 11, when 23 protesters were involved in what was perhaps the largest act of mass civil disobedience in Tacoma history. On Tuesday, the small second-floor courtroom at Tacoma's City-County Building was crowded with supporters.

Much of the hour-long hearing was taken up by complaints by attorneys Lawrence A. Hildes of Bellingham and Legrand Jones of Olympia about the failure of the City of Tacoma to respond in a timely fashion to detailed discovery requests. Defendant Phan Nguyen of Olympia, who is representing himself, joined in their requests, noting that he had received less than 24 hours earlier the sketchy police reports that constitute the City of Tacoma's only response so far to detailed discovery requests. Hildes said he had received the documents on Friday afternoon, Apr. 20, more than a month after submitting requests.

One request asked that members of the city's Disorder Response Team (DRT) present on the scene be identified by name. As attorneys for the prosecution and the defense continued to spar over the request, Judge Haugh interrupted them: "I think I just ordered that [the DRT team members be identified]."

An attorney representing the city of Tacoma told the judge over and over that his office had "provided what we have," and that the burden of demonstrating how other requests were "relevant" required a "reasonable factual showing" on their part. The city attorney's refusal to acknowledge the obvious materiality of "rules of engagement" that led police to arrest demonstrators for bringing backpacks into a demonstration area seemed to surprise Judge Haugh.

"See, if he was arrested for a backpack, then [any rule concerning backpacks] *is* material," Judge Haugh explained wearily.

Attorney Hildes explained to the judge the importance of the discovery request regarding so-called "rules of engagement" used by the police to justify arrests. "Videos mention 'rules of engagement' and 'because we say so' [as the basis for the backpack ban]. We specifically asked for the 'rules of engagement' because they keep talking about them. The backpacks contained only medical supplies and food."

"So that's the basis?" asked Judge Haugh, who seemed surprised. "Have you provided the 'rules of engagement'?" he asked the City's attorney.

"We have provided all the information we have," the prosecutor replied.

"He's going to find out," Judge Haugh told Attorney Hildes.

The defendants maintain that the backpack rule is unconstitutional, and also illegal under a Ninth Circuit case.

Judge Haugh said he had no prior familiarity with the matter before him, and expressed the hope that the parties would give him a presentation on the "anticipated factual background" of the case in the future.

Mark Jensen is a member of United for Peace of Pierce County, and of the faculty of Pacific Lutheran University.

Twenty-three activists were arrested at the Port of Tacoma on March 11. *Clockwise from top left:* Vietnam veteran Wes Hamilton of Olympia, Charlie Bevis of Tacoma, Sasha Crow of Seattle, and Somerset Fetter of Olympia. Some were arrested for crossing over a barricade, while others, like Charlie Bevis, were arrested for wearing a backpack. (Photos by Carrie Lybecker)

When will we start listening to Murray Bookchin?

FACING UP TO GLOBAL WARMING AS A REALITY, NOT AN ABSTRACTION

by Marco Rosaire Rossi

By now, global climate change has become a household concern, but many scientists are saying that for some ecosystems we may be past the point of repair.

We should have listened to famed social ecologist Murray Bookchin, one of the earliest harbingers of the dangers of global warming. As early as 1964, before an environmental movement even existed, Bookchin wrote:

> It can be argued on very sound theoretical grounds that this growing blanket of carbon dioxide, by intercepting heat radiated from the earth, will lead to rising atmospheric temperatures, a more violent circulation of air, more destructive storm patterns, and eventually a melting of the polar ice caps (possibly in two or three centuries), rising sea levels, and the inundation of vast land.

The only part of this statement that Bookchin got wrong was the time frame. It has only taken a matter of decades—not centuries—for humans to produce the devastation that he warned against. If we are not careful we could lose more than a few habits—we could lose the entire planet.

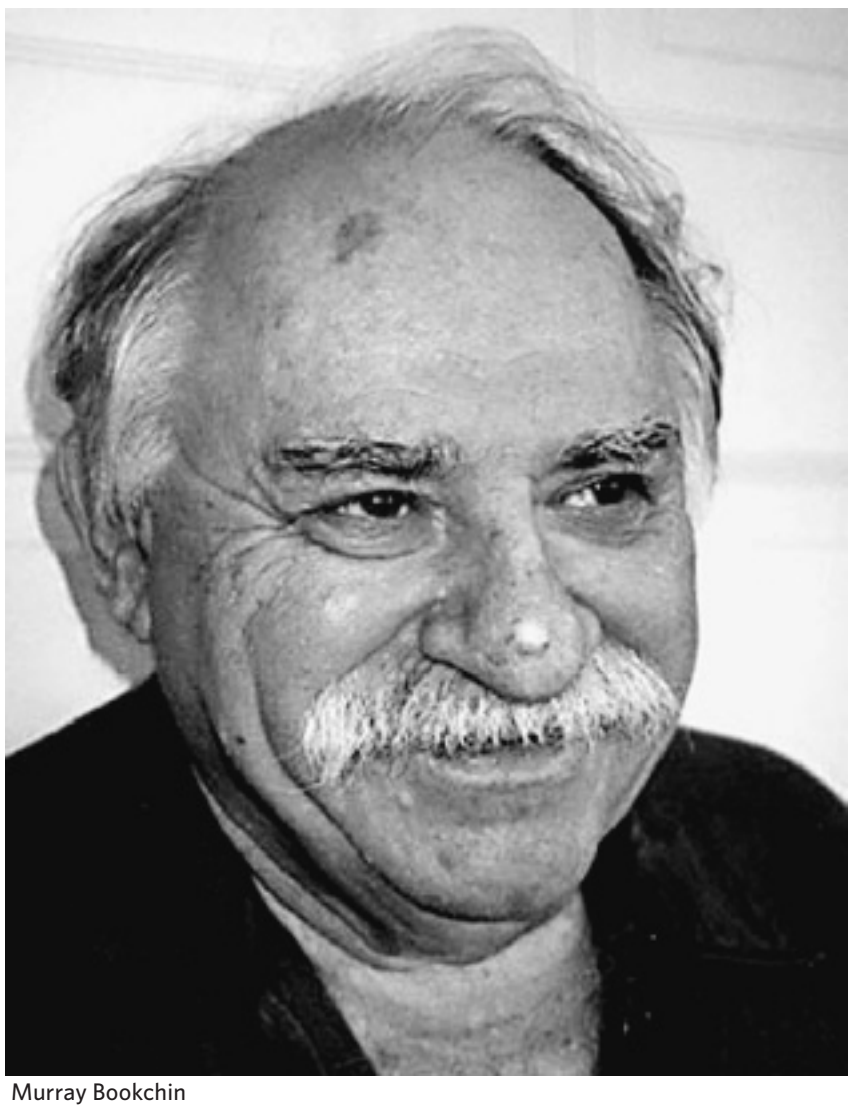
Recently in the United States—the country that contributes the most to the global warming crisis—there have been a few signs of hope that the warning is finally being heard. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that major global climate change is "very likely" caused by human activity. On April 2, the US Supreme Court ruled that carbon dioxide is an air pollutant and that the Clean Air Act does give the Evnvironmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to regulate it. Representative Ed Markey, chair of the congressional committee on global warming, has publicly stated that he believes a "cap and trade" bill to curb carbon emission could be passed by the end of 2008. And on April 14, environmental writer/activist Bill McKibben's "Step It Up!" campaign helped create the largest day of action against global warming in history.

These are all victories for the environmental movement, but they are small ones that have just squeezed by. The IPCC almost botched on the international consensus, and considered saying that major global climate change is only "likely" being caused by humans. The April 2 Supreme Court decision was made by a 5–4 ruling—much too close to see the decision inspire the EPA to get to work. The "cap and trade" plans are another "free market" plan for dealing with carbon emissions, and for that reason are not very effective at seriously weaning the world off of oil. And despite the success of "Step It Up!" many American's still remain extremely ignorant of the causes of global warming. A Pew poll shows that even though 83% of American acknowledged global warming as a serious problem, only 55% believe the government needs to take immediate action, and only 47% believe that humans are the main cause of it. Furthermore, there is still a part of the global warming debate that isn't seeing much discussion, and that's how global climate change is affecting the poorest in the world.

The United States accounts for 5% of the world's population, but is responsible for 25% of the world's greenhouse emissions. This contrasts dramatically with Africa, which accounts for 3% of the world's greenhouse emissions, but droughts and disruption in water access caused by global warming could put as many as 840 million Africans (7% of the world's population) at risk. The situation gets even bleaker with agriculture. Two million people are facing starvation in African. Africans farmers only grow one ton of cereal grains for every hectare—roughly 1/3 compared to other developing countries. That number is only expected to get worse as weather patterns become more unpredictable.

There is still a part of the global warming debate that isn't seeing much discussion, and that's how global climate change is affecting the poorest in the world.

Again, the prophecy of Murray Bookchin is important for understanding today's problems. In 1964, in his groundbreaking theoretical work *Ecology and Revolutionary Thought*, Bookchin wrote, "The imbalances man has produced in the natural world are caused by the imbalances he has produced in the social world." The problems of economic inequalities and erratic windstorms are connected. We cannot deal with one, without dealing with the other.



Murray Bookchin

It is time to not only seriously start dealing with global warming but also all the issues that are connected with it: poverty, development, corporate malfeasance and propaganda, imperialism, and of course, the lack of democracy. If not, then some of Bookchin's darkest words may be our tragic fate: "Looming before us is the image of a completely destructured and simplified natural world as well as a completely destructured and simplified urban world—a natural and social world so divested of its variety that we, like all other complex lifeforms, will be unable to exist as viable beings."

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